

Prison Basketball: Ex-NBA Player Now Working at ISP

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MICHIGAN CITY - Winston Garland has worked with some interesting people during his lifetime. Garland played eight years in the NBA with Golden State, Houston, the L.A. Clippers, Denver and Minnesota, and played a year in Italy. Some of his teammates during his playing career included Hakeem Olajuwon, Robert Horry, Chris Mullin, Christian Laettner, Isiah Rider and Tim Hardaway. "That's a dream come true," said Garland of playing in the NBA alongside those players. Today, he works with inmates at the Indiana State Prison as one of the recreation leaders. The Gary, Ind., native, who played high school ball at Gary Roosevelt and college ball at Missouri State, has been working at ISP for about the past three months after spending roughly the previous four to five months at Westville in a similar role. Garland was introduced to the idea of working with inmates through a childhood friend of his, Mark Hubbard. "He told me there was an opening out in Westville," Garland said. "So I went out there and worked in the rec department. (Then) he came over here and started working in the rec department and told me there was an opening over here. They have a state team, and they're looking for somebody to help run it. "So I was more than willing to come over and help out." Garland was drafted by the Milwaukee Bucks in 1987 in the second round (40th overall). That was the same year David Robinson went first overall to the San Antonio Spurs, and the Seattle Supersonics selected Scottie Pippen with the fifth overall pick. When the Rockets won the first of two consecutive NBA titles after the 1993-94 season, Garland was playing in Italy, after playing with the Rockets during the 1992-93 season. Then, he was with Minnesota during the Rockets' second title run in the 1994-95 season. Garland's last season in the NBA was following the 1994-95 season. During his career, he averaged 9.4 points per game in 511 career games played, scoring nearly 5,000 points for his career. Three times he averaged at least 10 points per game during a season. His best season came in his second year in the NBA while with the Golden State Warriors. That year, he averaged 14.5 points per game in 79 games, which was fourth-best on the team behind Mullin, Mitch Richmond and Terry Teagle. After his playing career, Garland coached in the Continental Basketball Association and at the high school level. But when he was pitched the idea of working with inmates and playing basketball, he wasn't concerned about what could happen. He added that he knew there wasn't going to be any away games. "My dad always said you're a stone's throw away from a penitentiary," Garland said. "... It's an eye-opening experience." Next year, Garland said he will be more active within the program as he will be one of the guys helping with the team selection process. But what is a former NBA player doing at a state prison working with its basketball team? "For one, I love the game," he said. "I played eight years in the NBA. Kind of opposite ends of the spectrum, but I enjoy it. There's quality guys on the team who made a couple of mistakes early on in life, but still love the game and still want to play." Contact sports writer Nick Dettmann at ndettmann@thenewsdispatch.com or 874-7211, Ext. 447.

About The Department of Correction

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